

THE ENGLISH ELECTIONS.

Why Gladstone Precipitated a Great Constitutional Crisis.

THE PEOPLE MOVING FOR RADICAL CHANGES

Foreign Diplomacy, Home Rule and Economic Reform.

DISRAELI'S POSITION.

Is It an Election or a Moral Force Revolution?

Aristocrats Anxious for the Security of Their Order.

LONDON, Jan. 30, 1874.

The sudden dissolution of the British Parliament has plunged the United Kingdom into the turmoil of a general election. Circulars and addresses, posters blue, yellow and red have been showered over the land; the telegraphic wires have pulled home by the ears, as it were, flocks of peripatetic members of parliament who were wintering placidly in Italy and France, and of many of whom one might say in Gray's pathetic lines—

Alas! unconsenting of their doom,
The little victims play;
Not thought have they of this to come,
Nor care beyond to-day.

From Lerwick, in the Shetlands, to Berwick upon Tweed, and from Berwick to the Scotch Isles; from the plains of Ulster to the wilds of Connaught; in pocket boroughs and teeming cities; in tory shires and Irish strongholds, there is a scampering as of herds of Bashan bulls let loose, and a thunderous bellowing of, "Vote for us!" "Vote for us!" Again one must break into rhyme and say—

From Manchester, where Tories are few and far between,
From Cornish shires, where radicals have never yet been seen;
From Shropshire North and Cockerly South, from Centre, East and West,
Up, up they come, with tongues a-swing, each man pre-
pared to stir up his best.

For "Church and Queen" or "People."

But why this unexpected call for "stump" and

WRAP AND THE CAUSES OF THIS DISSOLUTION?

In his address to the electors of Greenwich—one of the dreariest, most laborious manufactory ever peopled—Premier Gladstone makes a clean breast, and says that the Cabinet was no longer strong enough to carry on the affairs of the country. The triumphant liberal majority of 110 votes returned at the elections of 1868 had dwindled down to something under sixty, and of these sixty not ten could be fully depended upon. The ballot, which it had been thought would swell the liberal ranks, had had just the contrary effect, and one borough after another slipped out of the grasp of the Reform Club. Bath, Gloucester, Dover and Shaftesbury were lost; Greenwich, long steadfast in the faith, admitted an enemy to sit beside the Premier, and then Stroud deserted, with arms and baggage. This was the crowning bitterness. Stroud had returned Lord John Russell in the days of the first Reform bill; Stroud had of late years elected Mr. Winterbottom one of the Under Secretaries of State, and that season, should after this transfer its allegiance to the "Times," was proof enough that the "Tory reaction," so long denoted by the *Daily News*, *Daily Telegraph* and *Standard*, could be denied no longer. Then there was that Ashantee war, nipantly undertaken and grossly bungled. Had Ministers met the old Parliament they would have been roughly called to task and have been obliged to furnish explanations most disagreeable to them, seeing that war is an operation of which they know no more than cats do of gunpowder. Again, there was the settlement of the Russians in Khiva, contrary to the promises made by Count Schouvaloff; the famine in Bengal, the increase of the home rule movement and of ultramontane pretensions in Ireland, and, lastly, there was the question of Mr. Gladstone's seat at Greenwich, which a Parliamentary committee would have been pretty certain to declare vacated by the Premier's assumption of the Chancellorship of the Exchequer. By dissolving Parliament the Ministers avoided the painful necessity of being interrogated and vexed on any of the above topics. If they be honest they will resign before the new Parliament meets; if victorious they will be enabled to override opposition criticisms, as they did in 1869 and 1870, when they had an obedient majority at their backs.

Mr. Gladstone says that

THE LIBERALS ARE THE TRUE UPHOLDERS OF THE

THRONE,

and he dwells on the fact that forty years of liberal

administration have done more to consolidate

royalty than forty years of Toryism ever did. This is

undeniably true, but Mr. Gladstone omits to

point out the true reason of this phenomenon. When

the conservatives are in opposition they do

not fling stones at the Queen and constitution; and

the liberals, who at heart love titles, stars,

ribbons and embroidered clothing as much as

their rivals, are allowed to take a surfeit of these

brillings in full reign and security. But when the

liberals are out of office, in the award of minor

honors Mr. Gladstone has so invariably preferred

partnership to merit that, with the single excep-

tion of Mr. Amplett, just appointed to a plume

judgeship, not one conservative has obtained any

favor at his hands. In a word, the Gladstone Cab-

inet has stamped itself with a brand of meanness

and ungenerous pettiness. It is a Cabinet of

which Englishmen feel ashamed, and the ballot

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more emphatically than might have been the case

under the old system of voting. For

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and the ballot has altered the entire aspect of

English parties. Under the old system of open

voting party discipline was kept up without diffi-

culty, for men were in a general responsible to

their neighbors for the votes they gave, and they

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covert reasons. But nowadays in towns where

parties are pretty evenly balanced the scale must

be turned by those voters who are not particularly

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late from liberal to tory, according to the caprices

or grudges of the hour. Now the caprices are, as

we have shown, all against the liberals, and so

are the grudges. It is a significant fact that

although the liberals have lost nineteen seats in

ballot elections they have not been able to con-

quer a single seat which they did not possess be-

fore. Should this state of things prevail at all

the general election they would probably lose all

the seats where they only triumphed by narrow

majorities in 1868, and find themselves some 100

votes to the bad in the new Parliament. But it must

be remembered there is always a difference between

the temper of a constituency during a partial

election and its purpose at a general election, when

the government of the country is at stake; and it

may be that some of the interests now arrayed

against the liberals—namely, the home rulers,

licensed victuallers, Nonconformists and Roman

Catholics—may conclude secret treaties with the

party wretches before the day of battle, although

this is almost hoping against probabilities.

WHAT IS THE HOUSE OF COMMONS?

Americans may here ask, "What does the House

of Commons represent?" and to give the answer

to that question would puzzle the Court of Queen's

Bench. It represents different people and different

things in different places. The members for Man-

chester are generally supposed to represent the

Town Clerk. County members often represent

the local clergy, who represent a few

predominant maiden ladies of noble fam-

ilies. Most noblemen of good landed prop-

erty, who reside on their estates, send

one or two members to the House of Commons,

and one constituency not far from London is

represented by the gift of the local medical man.

liberals for nothing. They well know that their

riches and the prerogatives of their order are only

safe under a liberal administration. It has been

truly said that if the whigs had been in opposition

at the time of the Irish Reform bill riots there

would have been a revolution in England, for the

younger sons of whig peers would have put them-

selves at the head of the mob and have led them

to the torch. Mr. Gladstone is, therefore, quite

right when he describes the liberals as being the

firmest upholders of the throne. They are more

than its upholders—they are its saviors; for each

time they return to office they find the throne

splintered, soiled and tottering under the stones

and mud which their faithful followers have been

flinging at it, and the Queen naturally heaves a

glad sigh of relief when she sees them come, for

their arrival simply means "No more stones for

the present."

Mr. Gladstone, then, is anxious for a little rest,

but before vacating Downing street he has taken

the precaution of launching

TWO PARTISAN ARROWS AT THE CONSERVATIVES,

to wit:—A promise to abolish the income tax and

an undertaking to support household franchise in

the counties. These two measures, if resisted

by the Tories, will serve as useful texts for re-

clamations against class ascendancy during the

period of Mr. Disraeli's rule. If, however, the

Tories accept them, then the former innovation

will involve the conservative Chancellor of the

Exchequer in difficulties with his finances. He

will be unable to hold his surplus in his budgets,

and will be obliged, perhaps, to cast about him for

fresh taxes, whereupon the liberals will clamor,

like one man, that the Tories understand nothing

about managing the public purse, and they will

compacently adapt to themselves Tennyson's

lines—

"Only who love the people well,
And look to the people's welfare,

As to the household suffrage in counties, should

the Tories support that, what pretext more fruitful

for long drawn signs over the unscrupulousness

of Mr. Disraeli, ever ready to shrewd away his

convictions for the sake of retaining place? We

have scarcely done yet with the storm of liberal

indignation aroused when Mr. Disraeli dished

the whigs with his Reform bill of 1867, and

a new surrender on his part would be

pointed at as a final symptom of degradation in

the man. So Mr. Gladstone has virtually con-

trived to make things pleasant for his successors; and

possibly some of the keener liberal office-holders,

who are so anxious to see their chief to take a

little rest, may be thinking that Mr. Gladstone's

two measures may yet turn the scale in his favor

at the balloting. But this is not likely.

THE COUNTRY IS TIERED OF MR. GLADSTONE.

Never personally popular (for the qualities at-

tributed to him five years ago were such as com-

mand respect rather than affection), the liberal

leader has managed to rule Britain in a manner

profoundly repugnant to the majority of Eng-

lishmen. He has humiliated England in foreign

eyes, and this to so unmistakable an extent that

even the most partisan radical is forced to own

that Britain no longer holds the influence in the

world which she wielded under Palmerston. Russia

has torn up the Black Sea treaty in her face; the

United States (let this be said without offence

to American readers, for we are here dis-

secting English opinion), has forced her to

submit to a fine which, if proposed to the

universal suffrage of the United Kingdom,

would have been rejected; and the new born Em-

pire of Germany has spoken once or twice to Lord

Granville in a tone which no nation durst adopt

in former times when speaking to a British Min-

ister. Then, in the Franco-German war every one

feels that the Gladstone Cabinet let slip an op-

portunity of restoring England to the proud position

she held after Waterloo. When Napoleon disturbed

the peace of Europe by declaring war against Ger-

many on the most flimsy of pretexts, it was the

duty of England to take part against the ag-

gressor. Had she done this she would have shared

the triumph of the Germans and would even have

been forced to the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, and

the Germans, thinking they owed half their victories

to England, would not have insisted on the point.

This is what Englishmen are thinking about Mr.

Gladstone's foreign policy—a policy at once timid

and anti-humanitarian in its final results; but

they are not more satisfied with his policy in home

matters. The concessions made to the Roman

Catholic hierarchy in Ireland; the scandalous ap-

pointments of Mr. Harvey to the rectory of Ewelme

and Mr. J. C. to the rectory of Llanfyllter; the

disfranchisement of the Jews; the overriding of

Parliament by royal warrant; the frivolous ex-

periments of Mr. Lowe in finance; the vexatious

legislation of Mr. Bruce for the regulating of the

liquor traffic, and the invariable discourtesy shown

by the Cabinet in its relations with corporate or

scientific bodies—all these things would have

covered a tory administration with ineffaceable ob-

liguity, and they have made Mr. Gladstone and his

colleagues contemptible. Then sense and candor

will not readily forgive them, either, for the

many acts of petty jobbery they have perpetrated

to recompense party services. Liberals who are

so energetic in denouncing

THE INCAPACITY OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS

should, one would think, be more sedulous than

their opponents to appoint to that House none

but men of proved ability, and yet of the numerous

peers which Mr. Gladstone has created (he has

created more by himself than had been created dur-

ing the reigns of George IV., William IV. and of Vic-

toria before him) the majority are humdrum

bankers and merchants and the rest all gentle-

men undistinguished by any public service of con-

sequence. Then, again, in the award of minor

honors Mr. Gladstone has so invariably preferred

partnership to merit that, with the single excep-

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